Improving Speaking Skills in ELT — Procedure

From Guided Questions to Meaningful Interaction

Halis Bereket

Suggested timing

Opening and approach: 8 minutes; four demonstrations: 24 minutes; inclusion, feedback and progress: 10 minutes; teacher task design and trial: 14 minutes; reflection and close: 4 minutes. Adjust task lengths to the group.

1. Improving Speaking Skills in ELT

From Guided Questions to Meaningful Interaction / Halis Bereket • BEREKET ELT Archive

2. Give learners something to say

A purpose / A partner / Support / A reason to respond

3. Our workshop goals

Extend short answers / Build learner-to-learner interaction / Adapt one coursebook activity

4. The classroom starting point

One unit → a question bank / Familiar language → personal meaning

5. A question can open a conversation

Answer → add a detail / Explain → give an example / Ask → respond to your partner

6. Start with accessible questions

What do you enjoy doing? / When do you do it? / Who joins you?

7. Help learners extend an answer

because… / for example… / last time… / what about you?

8. Demonstration 1 • A coursebook topic

Food and daily life / Think → talk → ask → report

9. Food • Questions with a purpose

What meal can you prepare? / How do you make it? / What could we cook together?

10. From practice to interaction

Practice: name three ingredients / Interaction: agree on a meal

11. Demonstration 2 • Conversation cards

Choose a question / Explain your view / Ask one follow-up

12. Environment • Make a decision

How can we reduce classroom waste? / Which action is easiest? / Choose one action together.

13. Demonstration 3 • Role play

A guest needs help / A receptionist offers options / Agree on a solution

14. Language for a helpful exchange

Could you help me with…? / We can offer… / Would that work for you?

15. Demonstration 4 • Listen, then speak

Listen for the situation / Retell in your own words / Suggest the next step

16. Use varied starting points

Pictures • stories • listening / Movies • songs • presentations

17. Keep every learner involved

Think first / Rehearse in pairs / Share a selected idea

18. Support different levels

A1: choices + short frames / A2: reasons + follow-up questions / B1: alternatives + justification

19. Listen while learners speak

Are they making meaning clear? / Are they responding to each other? / What support is needed next?

20. Feedback that helps the next attempt

Recognise a clear message / Revisit one useful language point / Try the task again

21. Notice progress

A clearer message / A fuller answer / A relevant follow-up / A shared outcome

22. Teachers design a task

Choose one unit / Build a question sequence / Add a partner and an outcome

23. A practical lesson sequence

Prepare → model → rehearse / Interact → reflect → try again

24. Make room for meaningful speaking

Start with familiar language. / Help learners expand it. / Give them a reason to interact.

25. Materials and acknowledgements

Workshop adaptations: BEREKET ELT Archive / Source folder: question booklets + conversation cards / Background illustration: AI-generated